

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 13, 2010

The Honorable Raymond LaHood  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We write to bring to your attention our concerns that new federal laws requiring clear identification of regional airlines operating flights under the auspices of mainline carriers are not being followed or enforced.

Today, regional airlines account for more than half of all scheduled domestic flights in the United States, yet too often, travelers are under the impression that their regional flight is being operated by the mainline carrier that is advertised on the ticket and the aircraft.

To address this growing problem, Congress recently passed and the President signed the Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Extension Act of 2010. This comprehensive aviation safety package included a provision requiring vendors selling tickets for air transportation to disclose the name of the air carrier operating each segment of a flight. A 1999 regulation requires disclosure of code-share agreements (14 CFR 257), and the new law builds upon this regulation by requiring that carrier information "shall be provided on the first display of the Web site following a search of a requested itinerary in a format that is easily visible to a viewer."

Research indicates that this requirement is not being followed across the aviation and travel industry in the manner Congress intended. Some websites use codes or abbreviations instead of identifying the flight operator, while others completely omit any mention of a regional carrier operating a flight. We respectfully ask you to investigate further to ensure that the law passed by Congress and signed by the President is being followed in both letter and spirit.

The crash of Continental Connection Flight 3407 last year and its 50 victims highlight the need for transparency. Flight 3407 passengers purchased a ticket for a Continental Airlines flight believing logically that Continental would be operating the flight. We all know, of course, that in fact Colgan Air was contracted to operate the Dash-8 aircraft from Newark to Buffalo. Every part of this flight seemed like a Continental Airlines flight from the ticket they received at the counter to the lettering painted on the aircraft.

Especially after the Flight 3407 tragedy, Americans deserve to know who or what is operating the aircraft they are boarding. On this issue, simple and straightforward transparency is what consumers are asking for when they purchase a ticket and board a plane, and it is what Congress passed into law.

Thank you for your efforts and the efforts of the Department to enforce these new disclosure laws and to identify practices that violate their letter and spirit.

Sincerely,



Christopher J. Lee  
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator